A5

example, for the first group, developing temperature TW1 is chosen based on the above-described length.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please enter the following amended claims:

1. (Once amended) A thermal developing method for continuously and thermally developing thermal developing sheets which have a latent image formed thereon by exposure and various sizes,

A6

wherein a minimum temperature recovery time required for thermally developing a sheet is determined from physical information about a thermally developed sheet, said physical information including at least one of size and manufacturing material characteristics, and a next thermal developing sheet is started to be developed after the minimum temperature recovery time passes, and heating of said thermal development sheet is performed prior to thermally developing said thermal development sheet.

2. (Once amended) A thermal developing method according to claim 1, wherein the physical information comprises a combination of at least one of a dimension in a direction of a length, a dimension in a direction of a width, a thickness and a material of which the thermal developing sheet is made.

3. (Once amended) A thermal developing method for continuously and thermally developing thermal developing sheets which have a latent image formed thereon by exposure and various sizes,

wherein minimum temperature recovery times required for thermally developing a next thermal developing sheet are determined from physical information about a thermally developed sheet and physical information about the next thermal developing sheet, respectively, said physical information including at least one of size and manufacturing material characteristics, and the longer time of the minimum temperature recovery times is selected to be a minimum standby time and the next thermal developing sheet is started to be developed after the selected minimum standby time passes, and heating of said thermal development sheet is performed prior to thermally developing said thermal development sheet.

4. (Once amended) A thermal developing method according to claim 3, wherein the physical information comprises a combination of at least one of a dimension in a direction of a length, a dimension in a direction of a width, a thickness and a material of which the thermal developing sheet is made

5. (Once amended) A thermal developing method for continuously and thermally developing thermal developing sheets which have a latent image formed thereon by exposure and various sizes, comprising the steps of:

determining a minimum temperature recovery time required for thermally developing a next thermal developing sheet from a size of a thermally developed sheet;

measuring a time required until a rear end of the thermal developing sheet is completely developed and a tip of the next thermal developing sheet is then started to be developed;

comparing the required time with the minimum temperature recovery time; and

starting to develop the next thermal developing sheet if the required time is equal to or greater than the minimum temperature recovery time as a result of the comparison, wherein heating of said thermal development sheet is performed prior to thermally developing said thermal development sheet.

6. (Once amended) A thermal developing method for continuously and thermally developing thermal developing sheets which have a latent image formed thereon by exposure and various sizes, comprising the steps of:

acquiring information about a size of a next thermal developing sheet before a developing process;

measuring a time required until a rear end of the thermal developing sheet is completely developed and a tip of the next thermal developing sheet is then started to be developed;

determining a minimum temperature recovery time required for thermally developing the next thermal developing sheet from a size of a thermally developed sheet and a size of the next thermal developing sheet;

comparing the required time with the minimum temperature recovery time; and

starting to develop the next thermal developing sheet if the required time is equal to or greater than the minimum temperature recovery time as a result of the comparison, wherein heating of said thermal development sheet is performed prior to thermally developing said thermal development sheet.

7. (Once amended) A thermal developing apparatus for continuously and thermally developing thermal developing sheets which have a latent image formed thereon by exposure and various sizes, comprising:

sheet tip required time measuring means for measuring a time required until a rear end of the thermal developing sheet is completely developed and a tip of a next thermal developing sheet is then started to be developed;

minimum temperature recovery time determining means for determining a minimum temperature recovery time required for thermally developing the next thermal developing sheet from a size of a thermally developed sheet; and

comparing means for comparing the required time measured by the sheet tip required time measuring means with the minimum temperature recovery time determined by the minimum temperature recovery time determining means, wherein a means for heating heats said thermal developing sheet prior to thermally developing said thermal developing sheet.

9. (Once amended) A thermal developing apparatus for continuously and thermally developing thermal developing sheets which have a latent image formed thereon by exposure and various sizes, comprising:

sheet size information acquiring means for acquiring information about a size of a next thermal developing sheet before a developing process;

sheet tip required time measuring means for measuring a time required until a rear end of the thermal developing sheet is completely developed and a tip of the next thermal developing sheet is then started to be developed;

minimum temperature recovery time determining means for determining a minimum temperature recovery time required for thermally developing the next thermal developing sheet from a size of a thermally developed sheet and a size of the next thermal developing sheet; and

comparing means for comparing the required time measured by the sheet tip required time measuring means with the minimum temperature recovery time determined by the minimum temperature recovery time determining means, wherein a means for heating heats said thermal developing sheet prior to thermally developing said thermal developing sheet.